

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BUENOS 06202 01 OF 02 230049Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 SSO-00 /027 W
-----009527 230101Z /64

O 222100Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0000

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 6202

LIMDIS

FOR ASST SECRETARY TODMAN FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, SHUM, AR, US

SUBJECT: DRAFT MEMCON: ASST SEC TODMAN WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA

REF: BUENOS AIRES 6127

1. FOLLOWING IS DRAFT MEMCON FOR ASST SECRETARY'S
APPROVAL.

BEGIN TEXT. PRESIDENT VIDELA EXPRESSED HIS WARM WELCOME
TO ASST SEC TODMAN AND ASKED IF HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO TALK
WITH ALL THOSE WHOM HE HAD HOPED TO SEE IN ARGENTINA.
VIDELA WANTED HIM TO BE AWARE OF THE VIEWS OF A WIDE
RANGE OF ARGENTINES. HE HOPED AND BELIEVED THAT HIS
GOVERNMENT WAS FAITHFULLY INTERPRETING THE DESIRES OF
THIS LARGE GROUP.

2. AS A BACKDROP TO CURRENT EVENTS, THE PRESIDENT
SKETCHED OUT RECENT ARGENTINE HISTORY--THE PROGRESSIVE
DETERIORATION OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
CONDITIONS IN THE 1969-75 PERIOD. BY THE END OF
1975 THERE WAS A POWER VACUUM AT THE CENTER OF GOVERNMENT,
BUT THERE WAS ALSO GREAT RELUCTANCE BY THE ARMED FORCES
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BUENOS 06202 01 OF 02 230049Z

TO INTERVENE IN VIEW OF THEIR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE.
FINALLY, FACED WITH IMMINENT ECONOMIC COLLAPSE OF THE
COUNTRY WHICH WOULD HAVE THROWN THOUSANDS OF WORKERS
ON THE STREETS, PREY TO PREVIOUSLY UNSUCCESSFUL RECRUITING
EFFORTS OF THE TERRORISTS, THE MILITARY HAD TO
TAKE OVER WHEN THE POLITICAL PARTIES ADMITTED THEY
WERE INCAPABLE OF RESOLVING THE SITUATION.

3. THE ARMED FORCES TAKEOVER WAS NOT JUST ANOTHER PALACE COUP. IT WAS THE ASSUMPTION OF POWER BY THE ARMED FORCES AS AN INSTITUTION. THEY DID SO RELUCTANTLY, AND THEIR OBJECTIVE WAS EXCLUSIVELY TO GET THE COUNTRY BACK ON THE TRACK. THEY HAD NO SECTARIAN OR PERSONAL AMIBITIONS. THEY WERE COMMITTED TO RETURNING THE COUNTRY TO A THOROUGHLY REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY. THEY HAD MADE MUCH PROGRESS IN THE INTERVENING 16 MONTHS AND HOPED WITHIN A SHORT TIME TO MAKE MORE AND TO DEMONSTRATE SPECIFICALLY WHAT THIS GOVERNMENT WANTED TO ACHIEVE.

4. ASST SEC TODMAN NOTED THE PROGRESS MADE, THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY, AND THE VIRTUAL ELIMINATION OF TERRORISM--GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS. HE STATED THAT THE BASIS OF THE TENSION BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS WAS THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION'S CONVICTION THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF A GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE--INDEED ITS SOLE PURPOSE--WAS HOW IT TREATED ITS OWN PEOPLE. WHERE IT APPEARED THAT HUMAN RIGHTS HAD BEEN VIOLATED, WE FELT IMPELLED TO SPEAK UP. WE HAD RECEIVED MANY REPORTS OF VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE GOA'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST TERRORISM AND THE ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS WERE STRONGLY MOTIVATED TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST ANY SUCH ABUSES. THE USG APPRECIATED THE CRUCIAL SITUATION WHICH THE GOA FELT

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BUENOS 06202 01 OF 02 230049Z

ITSELF TO BE IN BUT COULD NOT BE SUPPORTIVE WHEN SUPPRESSION OF TERRORISM VIOLATED THE RIGHTS OF THE INNOCENT. HE SAID THAT THE POLITICIANS HE SAW SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO DO WHAT IT DID TO COUNTER TERRORISM AND THEY GENERALLY SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT AND FELT THE SITUATION IS GREATLY IMPROVING. THEY CONTENTEND THAT THE IMPROVEMENT IS SUCH THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOW RELAX RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY.

5. PRESIDENT VIDELA SAID HE WOULD NOT BE PICTURED AS ONE WHO IS UNCONCERNED ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF HIS CITIZENS. HE FELT THAT MAN, AS GOD'S WORK, MUST BE RESPECTED AND VIEWED AS THE PURPOSE OF SOCIETY. HE ARGUED THE GREATEST GOOD FOR THE GREATEST NUMBER AND CHALLENGED ASST SEC TODMAN TO FIND AN ARGENTINE WHO DISAGREED WITH HIM. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT PRETEND THAT THERE WERE NO EXCESSES BY THE SECURITY FORCES IN THEIR FIGHT AND PERHAPS EVEN SOME SCORE-SETTLING. HE SAID THAT WHAT WAS MOST IMPORTANT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVE; PEACE UNDER THE LAW AND A MONOPOLY OF FORCE UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL. WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT SEVERAL RECENT

DRAMATIC DISAPPEARANCES, HE FREELY ADMITTED THAT AT THIS STAGE OF THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM THE PROBLEM WAS OF ELEMENTS OF THE SECURITY FORCES WHICH--FRANKLY--WERE BEYOND THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTROL. THEY WERE WORKING HARD ON THIS AND SUCCESS WAS INDISPENSABLE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVES, BUT SO FAR THEY HAD NOT SOLVED THE PROBLEM.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BUENOS 06202 02 OF 02 222200Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 SSO-00 /027 W
-----007660 230101Z /64

O 222100Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1874

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 6202

LIMDIS

FOR ASST SECRETARY TODMAN FROM CHARGE

6. ASSTSEC TODMAN SAID THE GOA CANNOT EXPECT INTERNATIONAL RESPECT AND SUPPORT UNTIL INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED RULES OF BEHAVIOR ARE OBSERVED. HE HOPED WE COULD WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH THE GOA TO THIS END, BUT VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS WOULD UNDERMINE ANY EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES. THE GOA HAD MADE SUCH IMPRESSIVE STRIDES IN DEALING WITH TERRORISM THAT IT WOULD NOW BE SEEN AS A DEMONSTRATION OF STRENGTH IF THE GOA TOOK MEASURES WITH PRISONERS AND OTHER DETAINED PERSONS WHICH REFLECTED THAT STRENGTH. SUCH MEASURES MIGHT INCLUDE LISTS OF ALL PRISONERS NOW HELD, REINSTATEMENT OF THE RIGHT OF OPTION TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY, OR REINSTITUTION OF THE RIGHT OF HABEAS CORPUS. THERE WERE SOME CASES IN WHICH INTERNATIONAL OPINION BECAME ESPECIALLY CONCERNED. HE CITED THE DETENTION OF JACOBO TIMERMAN WHICH HAD AWAKENED MUCH CONCERN BECAUSE IT INVOLVED PRESUMED ANTI-SEMITISM.

7. PRESIDENT VIDELA SAID HE THOROUGHLY REJECTED ANY IMPUTATION OF RACISM TO HIS GOVERNMENT AND SAID

HE WAS THOROUGHLY DEDICATED TO PRINCIPLES WHICH DID
NOT TOLERATE IT. TIMERMAN WAS NOT A VICTIM OF RACISM;
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BUENOS 06202 02 OF 02 222200Z

HE IS SUSPECTED OF INVOLVEMENT OF ECONOMIC CRIMES WITH
GRAIVER, WHO IN TURN WAS INVOLVED WITH TERRORISTS.
TIMERMAN WILL BE DEALT WITH BY JUSTICE, BUT THIS
DOES NOT INVOLVE ANTI-SEMITISM.

8. ASSTSEC TODMAN EXPLAINED PRESIDENT CARTER'S CONCERN
ABOUT THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR ARMS AND ASKED IF
PRESIDENT VIDELA MIGHT GIVE HIS MOST SERIOUS ATTENTION
TO THE POSSIBILITY OF GOA RATIFICATION OF THE TREATY
OF TLATELOLCO. SUCH ACTION WOULD BE AN EXAMPLE FOR
THE HEMISPHERE.

9. PRESIDENT VIDELA SAID THAT THE GOA HAS ACCEPTED
NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS, WHICH IN PRACTICAL TERMS
ARE MORE EXTENSIVE CONTROLS THAN THOSE OF THE
NFZ TREATY WHICH HAS POLITICAL LIABILITIES
FOR THE GOA. HE SAID QUOTE WE WILL LOOK AT THE
SITUATION, HOWEVER, AND SEE IF ACCEPTANCE MIGHT BE
FEASIBLE. END QUOTE

10. ASSTSEC TODMAN NOTED THAT THE GOA HAS EXPRESSED
ITS SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN A VARIETY OF DOCUMENTS AND
STATEMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT. HE HOPED THAT THE GOA
MIGHT DO SO AGAIN BY SIGNING THE INTER-AMERICAN
CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS. THIS, TOO, WOULD
GIVE IMPETUS TO THE HEMISPHERIC CONCERN WITH THE
ISSUE. PRESIDENT VIDELA SAID THAT RATIFICATION
WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION AND HE WOULD SEE WHAT
MIGHT BE DONE.

11. FOLLOWING AN EXCHANGE OF EXPRESSIONS OF FRIENDSHIP
THE 65 MINUTE CONVERSATION ENDED. END TEXT
CHAPLIN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BUENOS 06202 02 OF 02 222200Z

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 22-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BUENOS06202
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770303-0416
Format: TEL
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770839/aaaabghn.tel
Line Count: 217
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d878fa56-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 77 BUENOS AIRES 6127
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1531823
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DRAFT MEMCON: ASST SEC TODMAN WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA
TAGS: PDIP, SHUM, AR, US, (TODMAN, TERENCE A), (VIDELA, JORGE RAFAEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d878fa56-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009